

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE  
HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE  
HONORABLE PATSY T. MINK,  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM  
THE STATE OF HAWAII

SPEECH OF

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 1, 2002*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Hawaii for yielding, it is with great sadness that I rise today to address the House.

I offer my deepest sympathies to PATSY MINK's family, husband John Francis Mink, daughter Wendy and brother Eugene Takemoto. Anyone who was fortunate enough to have been touched by her life knows that this Nation has lost a true warrior in the constant struggle for justice.

We will all miss her counsel and guidance as well as her friendship.

She encountered early on the difficulties of prejudice and sexism. She also understood the importance of coalition building that she would carry on for the rest of her career.

She was a person of firsts: first Japanese American woman to become a lawyer in Hawaii in 1952, first Asian American woman and woman-of-color elected to Congress, being 1 of only 12 women total in 1964.

Her energy in awakening all of our social consciousness through her tireless advocacy, work and dedication, inspired students, community leaders, political appointees and especially elected officials of the APA community and beyond.

Congresswoman MINK's record as an advocate for civil rights is unassailable, a crowning achievement being the passage of Title IX of the Federal education amendments in 1972. This landmark legislation banned gender discrimination in schools, whether it was in academics or athletics.

As I have indicated, she has been a role model for countless women as well as those of us from the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Though she is not physically present, her spirit and legacy will live on through those of us who believe that the fight for fairness and equity is never over.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, PATSY had a fierce passion for freedom and equal treatment for all persons and during these tense times as our Nation faces growing poverty rates and international turmoil, I'd like to close with two quotes from PATSY MINK. The first quote underscores her passion for the need to stand up for the underrepresented and the second quote makes the point that when our national security is tested, we as a people must not ignore the basic principles that this country was founded on:

If to believe in freedom and equality is to be a radical, then I am a radical. So long as there remain groups of our fellow Americans who are denied equal opportunity and equal protection under the law \* \* \* we must remain steadfast, till all shades of man may stand side by side in dignity and self-respect to truly enjoy the fruits of this great land.

America is not a country which needs to punish its dissenters to preserve its honor, America is not a country which needs to demand conformity of all its people, for its strength lies in all our diversities converging

in one common belief, that of the importance of freedom as the essence of our country.

We all know that Hawaii was founded by Polynesian travelers guided by the stars. Today in the skies of Hawaii shines yet another star in the constellations to still guide the islanders and those of us here on the mainland.

I will miss her very much.

USS SIERRA TRIBUTE

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 2, 2002*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay recognition to the men of the USS Sierra Veterans Association, who will be gathering at their annual "Ship Reunion" this weekend.

The *Sierra* (AD-18) had a long career of distinction within the U.S. Navy. A *Dixie*-class destroyer tender commissioned in 1944, the *Sierra* was named for the famous Nevada mountain range, which means "Snow Mountains."

Almost immediately after her commissioning, the *Sierra* began repairing battle-damaged destroyers in Pearl Harbor. During one nine-day period, the *Sierra's* crew performed 21,393 man-hours of work on 65 ships, for which they were commended.

As the Japanese forces were driven back across the Pacific, the *Sierra* followed the fleet, performing battle repairs and maintenance upkeep at the Admiralty Islands, Caroline Islands, Solomon Islands and the Philippines. Her early postwar duties included work on ships stationed in Inchon, Korea; Okinawa, Japan; and Tsingtao and Shanghai, China.

After transferring to Norfolk, Virginia in 1950, the *Sierra* served with the Sixth Fleet until 1992. Operating both in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic near Norfolk, the *Sierra* performed maintenance support to Sixth Fleet logistics, amphibious, combatant ships and submarines. This service included support to naval forces during operation Desert Storm in 1991.

In late August 1992, Hurricane Andrew, a devastating category 5 storm, left a wide swath of destruction throughout Southern Florida. Within 26 hours of being notified, the *Sierra* was en route to help rebuild shattered communities in South Florida. In less than one month, the *Sierra's* crew restored 12 schools, erected a tent city, provided federal emergency management agency case workers, supplemented Navy relief volunteers, provided Spanish linguists to U.S. Army medical units, and prepared tens of thousands of meals for relief workers, fire fighters and police officers. In this relief effort, the *Sierra* was the first ship to arrive, and the last to leave.

The *Sierra* was decommissioned on October 15, 1993 at the U.S. Naval Base in Charleston, South Carolina.

All too often, Mr. Speaker, ships like the *Sierra* have stood in the shadows of the more familiar front line combat vessels, the battleships and aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers. But as the history of this vessel has shown, these ships play a vital role in keeping those combat vessels operating at peak form.

Moreover, by making timely repairs at sea, ships like the *Sierra* save the Navy countless millions in more expensive upkeep and labor repairs in drydock.

The crew of the USS *Sierra* deserve the recognition of this house for their contributions to the U.S. Navy in times of war and peace. I want to further recognize the members of the USS *Sierra* Veterans Association for their efforts to keep the memory of their ship alive and strong, and extend my best wishes for a successful and memorable gathering this year.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. FRANK MASCARA**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 2, 2002*

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, on October 1, 2002, I was absent for personal reasons and missed rollcall votes numbered 424 through 426. For the record, had I been present I would have voted "yea" on all of these votes.

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ELIZABETH  
UPHAM-MCWEBB

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 2, 2002*

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Elizabeth Upham-McWebb, known to the world as "Aunt Bett" on the dedication of her statue of Little Brown Bear, and to commemorate her on ninety-eight prosperous years.

Born and raised in Monroe County, which is part of Michigan's 16th Congressional District, Aunt Bett grew up telling stories and writing with her parents and eight siblings. Aunt Bett has always loved working with children. After attending school, she became an elementary school teacher; she still enjoys teaching Sunday school to Monroe County youth. Aunt Bett's most famous accomplishments include authoring numerous verses and stories for children. The most well-known of these are Little Brown Bear and Little Brown Monkey. These remarkable stories have become favorites among children everywhere.

In May 1978, Aunt Bett was awarded a special state tribute. She also received numerous awards for her writing. Her rhymes and stories have been widely published in magazines, books and textbook readers.

Aunt Bett has benefited the community of Monroe County in countless ways. For decades she has been entertaining and assisting the reading world with her writing and teaching. In addition, she and her husband donated their playhouse to the Monroe County fair where it continues to serve as an exciting attraction to county children and adults. Aunt Bett has illustrated several safety posters that inform children of important safety rules. The Elizabeth Upham-McWebb "Little Brown Bear" Fund is endowed by the Trustees for the Community Foundation of Monroe County and with a major grant from the C.S. and Marion F. McIntyre Foundation to support programs which encourage children to read books.